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NOTES AND QUERIES.

INDIAN WITCHCRAFT.—Louis Gray (the witch doctor) and Dwyer Green, Indians, charged at Port Simpson¹ Police Court with suffering a “tort” or wrong to be inflicted upon one Mary Feak, an Indian woman of the Tsypmsean tribe, by circulating charges of witchcraft against her contrary to Section 103, Indian Act.

Both plead, “Not guilty.”

Matthew Feak called and sworn:—

“My name is Matthew Feak. I am a member of the Port Simpson Band. Some time last March Louis Gray cut a cedar-tree somewhere up in the woods near here, and took three men along with him,—Dwyer Green, and, I have heard, Hezekiah Wesley; the third I do not know. When the tree was cut down, it happened that one of the Brentzen family died at the same time. Of course I have heard about this Huldagwit² a number of times; and this Louis Gray, as a medium, had picked out this tree as being used by one practising witchcraft, and had had the tree cut down. The witchcraft stories were quieted for a time; but in November, 1915, a gasoline-launch went up from Port Simpson to the Nass to bring the chiefs down for a conference on the Indian land question. The names of those who went up are Dwyer Green, Nathan Lawson, Andrew Wells, Joshua Wells, Celeste Wesley, and Rufus Dudaward. They went up the Nass; and while there, the mention was made of this witchcraft and the cutting-down of the tree. Joshua Wells turned to Dwyer Green and said, ‘You are one of Louis Gray’s disciples or followers. Why do you hide the name of the one who is practising witchcraft?’ Dwyer Green returned, ‘I am a Christian man, and I do not see why I should hide it. I will name the one who has been using this tree to practise witchcraft.’ So he named my mother, Mary Feak. Dwyer Green said he was not afraid, so he told the name Matthew Feak.”

Celeste Wesley sworn:—

“My name is Celeste Wesley. I am a member of the Port Simpson band of Indians. When I was up at Fishery Bay on the Nass River, that is where I heard Dwyer Green say he had cut a tree down where some one had been practising witchcraft. Dwyer said there was an evil box up in the tree. Joshua Wells is the one who asked him if he knew the owner of the box. Dwyer was quite certain that he knew the party. This is where he mentioned Emma Musgrave (William Musgrave’s mother) and Mary Feak (Matthew Feak’s mother) as the owners of the evil box found in the tree. Joshua asked Dwyer if he found this when they cut the tree

¹ British Columbia.

² Witch.

down. 'No,' he said, 'we found it the second day.' Joshua asked what was in it. Dwyer said, 'A dead rat with human hair' and all sorts of stuff with it. Louis Gray, Dwyer said, had told him to cut the tree down. There were eight of us in the launch who heard the story. This is all I can remember.'

Q. Who started the conversation?

A. I am not sure. I was at the stern of the boat when I heard Dwyer Green and Joshua Wells arguing over the question of this witchcraft.

Matthew Lawson (made the same evidence as last witness).

Dwyer Green, wishing to give evidence on his own behalf, was sworn: —

"I laid this whole thing before Matthew Feak in his house, and I confessed to what I said on the launch. At the Nass I told Matthew everything of the conversation that was told here to-day. I didn't mean to say it. I said it as a joke, and I told Matthew Feak this. It was all right then between Matthew Feak and his wife. I shook hands with them and went out. The reason I went to Matthew Feak and his wife, I did not want the story spread around town, so I settled it between them. [Also sees Musgrave's mother and settles it, but William Musgrave told him it would depend on what the law said.]"

Louis Gray (Indian of Port Simpson), wishing to give evidence on his own behalf, was sworn: —

"This is my first time in court in the town of Port Simpson. All the time I have been following religion. I did not see any evil box in the tree. I did not see Mary Feak or Emma Musgrave there through my medium while in the trance. You know why I am here. It is about this tree last year. About four weeks before the army came down from the Nass, while in a trance or dream before the death of Henry Brentzen's son Johnny, I was called up by the Brentzens to their home to test him by the use of my powers as a medium. I placed my hand on his head, and four spirits came to me, — two men and two women. I do not know who they were. It was not more than two minutes I saw them. This is where they told me that this tree should be cut down. They told me it was a tree where the trunk had been cut out. The spirits didn't say there was a box in the tree. They did not say that the evil box belonged to Mrs. Feak and Mrs. Musgrave. I did not work this out alone myself. I called Joseph Bradley in council, what was the meaning of this tree. The answer is there. Joseph said there must be a tree. Henry Brentzen called me up four times, and I saw the same thing four times. After the fourth time, the next day I talked it over with the Brentzens. I wanted to know the meaning of it. I asked Henry Brentzen if I could cut a tree down. I did not know if there was a box in the tree or not. All I saw was the tree when I was in my trance, and the names of the two women were never mentioned all the time we were talking of the tree or the evil box. We got to the foot of the tree. I asked Henry if it was the kind of tree I mentioned. The tree was leaning downhill. It was chopped out in the trunk. I asked Henry which

way the tree was leaning, as twice I had told him in his house. Henry said it was the tree. We didn't see any one around the tree, or any evil box. The size of the tree was not fit for the axe Henry had brought along with him. The alder-tree was too big. I mentioned that Dwyer Green had a long saw; so Dan Green and Hezekiah Wesley were called with him, because they were strong men and I wanted that tree to be cut down the same day, so I would be in peace. I say again, I never mentioned the women's names or the evil box. Joseph Bradley called the men, and they cut the tree down. After the tree was down, I was out of it. The spirits hadn't given me any more instructions. I had done my duty. When the tree was felled, the men went up to the top of it, and this is where they found some mysterious-looking place where the boughs had been cut off. We thought this was where the witchcraft was practised."

Cross-questioned by Provincial Constable Deane.

Q. Were you there when the dead rat was found the next day?

A. No. It was brought to me.

Q. Was there anything besides the dead rat?

A. There was something like two or three hairs inside this dead rat.

Q. Where did Hezekiah find the dead rat?

A. He said he found it inside the bark of the tree. He did not tell me if it was near where the boughs were cut.

Q. Have you seen these four spirits before?

A. Yes.

Q. Always the same four spirits?

A. Yes.

Q. Have they never told you what nationality they were?

A. No. It was when I was first sent up as a missionary to Ketseucla that I first saw lights. I prayed for God to open my eyes to show me things I didn't know. They gave me by-laws for Ketseucla, and I didn't know what to say. Mr. Crosby had told me to pray when I wanted to get things straight. It happened in Simpson when I first saw them (spirits). I saw a kind of light, and before the death of a person I would see the light. Mrs. Welsk is the first person I heard crying before the death of Mrs. Welsk. I saw myself standing in two. (Duplicate) I was face to face with myself. Then I saw the four spirits. They were singing in the native language. They were standing in the canyon of death. They did not say who was going to die, but the words meant some one was about to die. Two were men, and two were women. The men wore white men's pants and coat. They had a face like a human being, no mustache or whiskers. The two women had long hair hanging down their backs. They were middle-aged. I got five dollars from Mr. Brentzen for my services. I did not give Hezekiah a fungus when the tree was cut down. Mr. Brentzen called us into his place after the tree was cut down about dusk. He asked me if I could see or foresee anything in this tree. I said I couldn't say anything myself. Mrs. Brentzen went into another room, and came out with a glass in her hand and placed it in front of me, saying she was glad to find out just the reason of the disease of their son. The four spirits came to me again, telling me not to move. I don't go into a kind of fit when I see

the spirits. This is when the spirits told me there was a rat in the trunk of the tree. Mary's name, or Emma's, were not mentioned, or a box. I foresaw again a frog. This was not in the looking-glass. I did not have a hold of anything. I did not even have my eyes shut. Another thing I saw is a broken glass; the color was yellow. Finally a voice came to me saying this glass was what they used as a dagger, but Emma's or Mary's name were not mentioned. I think Johnny Brentzen died of trouble in the throat, not by witchcraft. I have never seen a patient die by witchcraft. They spoke to me up at Nass about witchcraft, but I told them I would have nothing to do with it. I don't know what to call these spirits of mine. Joseph Bradley council with me about these spirits. He knows about old customs, not witchcraft. He knows about the old days ever since I was a small boy. I have heard of witchcraft, but I have not known of it being practised at Port Simpson. Dwyer Green was lying when he said on oath that I told him Mary and Emma were practising witchcraft. Sam Bennett found the frog I foresaw. It was in the tree above the twelve yards. The glass was never found. I am sure it was not inside Johnny. I could not look into his body.

Both found guilty, and fined each ten dollars and costs or thirty days in jail.

THE MAN-EATER.¹—In a certain village in the kingdom of Y there live a very well-to-do herdsman and his wife and several children. They own the biggest poultry-farm, and herds of cattle, horses, and flocks of sheep, in the kingdom. They are oftentimes so worried by the boundless increase of their animals, that they wish they could eat a visible portion of them. One time rinderpest breaks out in the kingdom, and their herds perish in great number. The father becomes more worried, for the perishing cattle cannot all be buried. During this event, so wearisome and dreadful, the wife conceives a child; and as a result she manifests a behavior very different from her former life. She now eats very much. Her appetite increases disproportionately as her pregnancy matures. One distinct behavior which she observes during all this time is, that, when she takes a light meal, the little seed in the womb moves to her pain, and she can only keep it still when she fills her belly with half a dozen chickens. Time goes on, and soon she gives birth to a baby boy. The boy shows early great insatiability. In the cradle he eats one big chicken at one meal; and when he is as old as to begin to walk, he can consume one big carabao at a meal. The father, who prepares the food of his son, gets more worried because he can do no other work than cook.

The rinderpest ceases. The herds of cattle horses, and flocks of sheep increase in number indefinitely. One time, when the father goes to the pasture-lands, he takes his little boy with him; and, to his surprise, the boy devours calves and colts as a hungry dog eats chickens. But his father is not discouraged at this; on the other hand, he is proud of his insatiable son. Soon the big flocks of chickens are gone. The herds of cattle and horses are decreasing. The boy's father now sees that the time is coming when he will have no more of his multitudinous wealth. Yes, the time is coming; and what will the boy do after he has consumed all that his father has?

¹A Filipino tale.